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- ART. VI. — 1. *Œuvres posthumes de LAMENNAIS*. Publiées par M. E. FORGUES.
2. *Correspondance du COMTE JOSEPH DE MAISTRE*. Edited by M. ALBERT BLANC.
3. *L'Amour*. Par MICHELET. Paris: Hachette.
4. *La Dernière Bohémienne. Faustine*. Par MME. CHARLES REYBAUD. In 2 vols. Paris: Hachette.
5. *Dahila, et Le Roman d'un Jeune Homme Pauvre*. Dramas by OCTAVE FEUILLET. Paris: Michel Levy.
6. *Une Année dans le Sahel. Journal d'un Absent*. Par M. EUGÈNE FROMENTIN.

No matter to what religious persuasion one may belong,—though he be a Protestant Christian, a Jew, or a Turk,—it is impossible to deny the extreme importance of the French clergy in an intellectual point of view. Whether to Gallican or Ultramontane, Jesuit or Jansenist, the French language owes some of its very finest productions to the Catholic divines, especially within the last two centuries and a half. From Bossuet and Fénelon down to Monseigneur de Frayssinous and the present Bishop of Orleans (Monsieur Dupanloup), French literature stands indebted for many of its very best pages—setting aside even those that seek to perpetuate the impression of the pulpit—to the wearers of the *soutane*. We believe that, except the Dominican, Father Lacordaire, few of the clerical celebrities of the present day in France have found their renown acknowledged, or their merits known, by the general public of other countries. This results in part from an illiberality that is not in keeping with the progress of our times. All the ecclesiastical writers of our day do not write to preach, or to proselytize,—nor do they occupy themselves exclusively with matters of faith. Of the Père Lacordaire, for instance, there are many remarkable pieces of purely literary criticism; and indubitably, in the works of the Oratorian, Abbé Gratry, there is much that would do honor to the mathematician, the physiologist, the moralist, or the poetic lover of the arts. Few things more excellent were ever published by any one, than the long and comprehensive dis-

course delivered by the Bishop of Orleans, in 1854, on his reception by the *Académie Française*; and a bolder, more uncompromising protest than this in favor of antiquity, of all classical studies, and of learning in general, never bore the signature of Villemain, Cousin, or any of those whose names are identified with the teaching of the University.

It is not, however, our present purpose to discuss a clerical author whose works are other than clerical; for the works of Lamennais derive their chief interest from the passionate way in which they enter into the very heart of ecclesiastical questions, and take part with, or against, the Papacy. The man's whole life was in this struggle, and no love-tragedy ever contained more dramatic passages than those by which Lamennais's existence as a churchman, and simply with regard to his creed, was marked. From very early days there has been a double tendency in the Church of France, — a retrograde and progressive, absolutist and liberal, — a desire, on the one hand, to bend every head under the yoke of mere authority, because that authority was, and an opposite wish to enlarge the basis of belief, so as to make it reasonable to submit. In later years, this contest is appreciable under the names of the two contending parties, Jansenist and Jesuit. The latter take part with an extreme and absurd and ill-advised interpretation of Rome's infallibility, and the attempt is actually made to declare Rome infallible in the statement of facts. By common accord, it is admitted by every Catholic that such and such propositions (touching grace) are to be condemned, but it is not true that the propositions are in the accused book written by Jansenius. Hence the quarrel. The Jansenists say: "We should condemn the propositions as you do, did they exist, but they do not exist." And the Jesuits answer: "Rome has declared the propositions to be in Jansenius's book, *ergo*, they are there." On this point the double tendency showed itself more violently than ever, and equal vehemence broke out on both sides; but Louis XIV. took up the Jansenist view of the matter, the Jesuits were beaten, and certain articles consented to by Rome, about which Rome has never been easy since, and which have been the source of all the greatness of the Gallican Church in modern times. The

question, apparently set at rest in the days of *Le Grand Roi*, has never ceased to be discussed since that period, and no ecclesiastic exists in France who is not forced by some circumstance or other to choose between the Ultramontanists and the Gallicans, and who does not, for the most part, end by being violent and aggressive in his way of supporting his doctrines. The Abbé de Frayssinous, celebrated under the Restoration under the title of Bishop of Hermopolis, has left what, in contemporary history, is the code of the liberal French Catholics, in a volume entitled *Libertés de l'Eglise Gallicane*, in which the following formula expresses the profession of faith of the French Christian, as far as the Papist element is concerned: "The Holy See is for us the centre towards which all converges, *but is not the source whence all is derived.*"

Early in this century of ours, a young priest of colossal talent as a writer commenced his career in France by supporting the authority of the Church with passionate warmth. He was either seven hundred years behind his time, or two centuries before it. Those will come, doubtless, who will sympathize with him, and such a genius as Saint Bernard would have understood him. In his own epoch the clergy of his own country stood aghast, and wondered who was the madman who thus took to heart that whereof they — nine tenths of them at least — made a mere trade. They were good, honest men, nearly all of them, even pious, and sincerely convinced; but they did not want to be troubled in their quiet lives, and they kept aloof from this terrible brother of theirs, who sought from them more than they could give. He dreamed, for years, of the greatness of the supremacy of the Church, of the bold and steady action of the Papacy for the advancement and the good of all mankind. He, like Bossuet, like Leibnitz, like all truly enthusiastic souls, believed in the possible accordance of Reason and Faith, and he wanted the Church to take the initiative of the whole, and the Pope to preach the new era. Lamennais went through many modifications, but for long years his vision was of everything sublime and glorious to be achieved by him whom he held to be Christ's Vicar upon earth. He wrote and preached these doctrines, and poured forth floods of such eloquence as Bossuet never equalled, in

support of his opinions, while the bishops looked upon him as "dangerous," and none would take ground with him. But then Lamennais turned round and said, "I'll go to Rome," and to Rome he went, strong in faith, in hope, in genius, and in resolution. Months passed, and Gregory XVI. would not even receive the French pilgrim. At last, an audience was vouchsafed him, and one day Lamennais stood in the Papal presence, in a small, dark room at the end of interminable dark corridors in the Vatican. The Pope asked the wondering priest to take snuff, talked to him of pictures, pressed upon him a small statue of Michel Angelo, assured him of his affection, and sent him away stifling under the pressure of all the grave unuttered words he had come so far, and had waited so long, to utter. Lamennais was of an ardent nature, and had led the really austere life of a priest. All his feelings had a fearfully concentrated force. His whole being was shaken, convulsed, by this reception. Disappointment, to be converted into hatred, absorbed his whole soul, and usurped the place of every gentler sentiment. Nothing in the French tongue can surpass, and few things have ever equalled, Lamennais's own account of this downfall of all his hopes. Any translation must seem weak, but here is the sense of his words:—

"I will fly from France,—I will go, God knows whither,—I will wander, first here, then there, until I find the last resting-place which is to be found anywhere. 'All lands,' says an ancient, 'are a country to the strong'; I belong not to the strong,—far otherwise. But I have ceased to care for aught that passes in the world. There is no longer now a place for the honest man! I equally detest all the parties that divide France. Everywhere folly;—everywhere corruption. Catholicism was my life, because it is that of humanity. I would have defended it. I wanted to save it from destruction. Nothing was easier to achieve. The bishops held that that did not suit them. Rome still remained; I went thither, and I found the most infamous cesspool (*le plus infame cloaque*) that ever offended the human eye. The gigantic sewer of the Tarquins would be too small to carry off so huge a stream of filth. There is one only god,—self-interest. There, they would barter nations for gold, they would sell all human nature, they would sell the three Divine persons of the Holy Trinity, one after the other, or all three at once, for a rood of ground, or for a few piasters! I saw all this, and I said to myself, this evil is beyond the capacities of man, and I looked away in terror and in disgust."

Of course, to a clerical or to a Catholic reader, there are sources of interest in the posthumous works of Lamennais, which lie in the mere subject-matter of the book; but there is no reader who will not be captivated by its pages, on account of the intense passion which animates every line. It is the story of the ardent love, and of the despair unto death, of one of the greatest souls ever clothed by the Almighty in a human form.

The new volume of the Correspondence of Count Joseph de Maistre owes its interest to precisely the same order of ideas as those that animate the posthumous works of Lamennais. That the interest was a powerful one, and that subjects so serious are still capable of awakening such an interest in the French public, is proved by the fact of two editions having been exhausted, in three or four months, of a work by an author utterly unknown in the literary world, and at a price far beyond what Frenchmen are used now to pay for a book. When we say that the "author" of the work before us was unknown, we mean that the editor of the new documents collected concerning Joseph de Maistre, M. Albert Blanc, was a stranger to the French reading world, in country as in fame. This new edition of the Correspondence of Joseph de Maistre is by no means what the first was (four or five years ago), simply a collection of letters and diplomatic notes, one coming in succession after the other without any explanation or commentary whatsoever. On the contrary, M. Albert Blanc has, as it were, introduced every fragment of Count de Maistre to the reader, and not a passage is given without its sense and importance being previously explained. The book has made a kind of revolution, for it reveals a part of M. de Maistre's character which the general public never suspected till now. Those who were intimate with him find him whole and entire, and as they knew him, in his recently published documents; but between the *traditional* De Maistre and the one just newly exhibited there is a gulf, and the metamorphosis is as complete as can well be imagined. The De Maistre with whom all the world is familiar is the implacable promulgator of absolutist theories, the author of the *Soirées de St. Petersbourg*, of *Le Pape*, and of so many

other world-famous works, — the man who declared the executioner to be the “corner-stone of the social edifice,” and whose authority was invoked by all who contemplated a return to the times of despotic monarchy, or to the days of the Inquisition. The most violent of the followers of M. Veuillot in the *Univers*, and M. Veuillot himself, invariably took as their patron Count Joseph de Maistre, and it had grown into a habit in France (especially since 1848) to look upon him as the upholder of Ultramontanism in religion, and, politically speaking, of *authority*. When the collection of his letters was published a few years ago, certain passages created a considerable sensation, and the hard, dogmatic, absolutist idol was modified, though not overthrown. People were much astonished at the charm of M. de Maistre’s private letters, at the grace and playfulness of their style; but they merely took all this as a proof that, in his own interior, with his daughters and female friends, he put off his harshness and austerity, and only “roared like a sucking dove.” In the face of this new volume, however, the former worshippers of the Piedmontese diplomatist are obliged to confess that the object of their veneration has disappeared altogether, and made way for an adversary than whom Voltaire himself was scarcely more terrible. The case is a perplexing one, and it has been a matter of no small embarrassment to know how, in some instances, to deal with the book. Of course, the Papal See has, with its usual tact and judgment, laid M. Blanc’s work under interdict, and accused the author of having given to the world a De Maistre that “did not in reality exist,” forgetful that every document contained in the volume just published is open to the inspection of any Cardinal or *Monsignor* who may desire to examine them, in the archives of the Foreign Office of Turin. The epigraph which M. Albert Blanc has chosen out of Count de Maistre’s Correspondence, and placed in the frontispiece of his book, really does contain the spirit of the documents now made public for the first time: “*Il faut prêcher sans cesse aux peuples les bien faits de l'autorité, et aux Rois les bien faits de la Liberté!*” It must be admitted that, for nearly half a century, the notion conceived of M. de Maistre had been purely

one-sided, and the part of his literary labors with which the public of Europe were familiar was exclusively the part in and by which he sought to "preach to the peoples the advantages of authority." M. Blanc, in his Preface, very justly observes that the "second half of the sentence" — that relating to the vindication of liberty in the face of kings — "is the principle which animates throughout the private correspondence of Count de Maistre," and that "other half" of his hero's character, as a writer, a diplomatist, and a thinker, is the point to develop which the editor has undertaken his present work.

We confess that, to our mind, Joseph de Maistre is less metamorphosed than the generality of readers fancy, by the new dress in which he appears before the public. Whoever has lived much in Paris among the persons who, thirty or thirty-five years ago, formed the intimate circle of M. de Maistre, has been accustomed to think of him very differently from those who believe him to have been the champion of absolutism and religious obscurantism, and there is consequently in France — in Paris particularly — a small public which in M. Albert Blanc's most interesting volume finds the perfect type of the De Maistre it has known by repute, for a considerable space of time. The great feature of Count de Maistre we take to have been an execration of foolishness, carried to such a height, that whatever is in any way commonplace drives him beyond bounds, and he takes up a treble-thonged whip to scourge it. Now he figured on the world's stage at a moment when exaggeration of the most mischievous sort found its supporters in a host of mediocrities, and when servile souls paid their court to the potentates of the earth equally by atheism and by despot-worship. De Maistre would always argue seriously with a "free-thinker" whose studies had been deep and conscientious upon matters of religion, but who had unhappily not been recompensed by faith; but he felt only the most withering contempt for the numerous tribe of men who disbelieved lightly, and whose incredulity was little save a form of affectation. With this class of infidels he became a fanatic, and would, in his anger, have welcomed all the violence of

the Inquisition, while with the Christians of another tradition than his own, who were serious and sincere, he was the most tolerant of men. On the other hand, the monstrous silliness displayed by the champions of tyranny, whether monarchical or clerical, aroused in the same degree all his wrath, and the bitter sarcasms he vents upon these mediocrities of a contrary species are the very cause of the vexation felt at the present hour in certain absolutist centres in connection with the publication of his *Correspondance Diplomatique*. If you seek for the unity of Joseph de Maistre between two such apparently antagonistic productions as are, for instance, *Le Pape* and this last volume of documents, you can find it only in what an English politician once termed the *foolophobia* wherewith he is possessed. M. de Maistre's horror of a fool is something not to be described; he prefers an intelligent enemy to an adherent who is his inferior in intellect, and he turns round savagely upon what are in fact his own opinions, if he finds them supported by a fool. For instance, nothing is easier than to imagine the amount of silliness and servility combined which made Bonaparte's *traineurs de sabre* applaud the unworthy imprisonment of the Pope, producing a reaction of indignation in the mind of M. de Maistre, and prompting him to write the excessive apology for Ultramontanism entitled *Le Pape*. On the other hand, when he finds himself in presence of the foolishness and exaggeration of the opposite party, he loses sight of every other consideration in his desire to chastise the absurdities and weaknesses of the court of Rome, and those who surrounded it. We find under the date of February, 1804, the following letter:—

“It seems that there is no small dissatisfaction at Paris. The Pope gives chaplets without end, and everything in France being a matter of fashion only as far as chaplets go, these are plenty, but that is all. Everybody has a chaplet, and women of the last and lowest description as to morals have them like the rest. The laugh seems, however, universally to go against the *good man*, who, to his glory be it said, is that, but that only. But it is a great and serious and public calamity to have a mere good man in a place and at an epoch when a *great man* is required.”

If these words had been written in 1834 or 1854, instead of

a quarter of a century earlier, they could not have expressed more thoroughly than they do the feeling of all intelligent Catholics of the present day towards Rome ; and while still retaining his belief in Christianity, Lamennais would not have said more strongly what he regretted and what he hoped. M. de Maistre's anger is, to use M. de Montalembert's words, the "anger of love" ; but it is anger, and that is too much for the ultras of our times, whose intellectual inferiority is everywhere on a par with their violent intolerance.

The astonishment that has been created by this altered aspect of M. de Maistre, is not comparable to that which the public has felt in the perusal of Michelet's new volume, entitled *L'Amour*. Every instinct of propriety has been offended, and, let us hasten to say, we do not mean in the ordinary acceptation of the word only, but in the artistic sense also. Here is a writer, whose trade has been history, seeking suddenly his inspiration where novelists mostly seek theirs ; here is a man of between sixty and seventy, choosing for his theme that of which youths and maidens of eighteen or twenty usually conceive themselves to be the authorized professors. There could be no one possible *convenance*, to use the French term, observed in a dissertation upon *Love*, the author of which should be the "erudite artist" (as he styles himself), Michelet, — nor is any *convenance* observed. "'T is a mad" book, "my masters," is the only phrase thoroughly applicable to this extraordinary rhapsody. If, however, it were nothing but an extraordinary rhapsody, it would be a waste of time to speak of it. It is, more than that, inasmuch as it contains, here and there, some of those curious and inspired pages, which perhaps no one but Michelet is capable of writing. In this respect he has judged his own faculties remarkably well, when he calls himself an "erudite artist." Michelet, as we have more than once taken occasion to say, is not merely an historical writer, — not, indeed, an historian of the same species as any other ; for the quality that predominates in him is the quality that is least required by the mere historian, — imagination. Yet this faculty is not in him so absolute that it can suffice for the purposes of production, as it does, for instance, with Sir Walter Scott. No ! Michelet's

imagination requires to be provoked by some fact. He does not invent dramatic situations or characters; but when he meets them in history, he takes fire at once, and poetizes them. He is one of the most singular exemplifications of the possibility of "imagining what is known." When any passage of history has become so thoroughly fixed in his memory that it is, as it were, part of himself, he then employs a process of re-creation, and the forms that in reality are evoked by his knowledge have entirely the air of being evoked by his imagination. In a purely psychological point of view, Michelet is one of the most interesting organizations which it is possible to study. He is absolutely, and in every sense of the word, an "artist"; but an artist who does not provide the stuff on which he operates, but must have the raw material furnished ready to his hand. He is erudite beyond belief, and if he had not his artistic qualities, he might have been a Benedictine, — just as, if he had not his erudition, he might, perhaps, have been a Victor Hugo, or a Beethoven, had the ray of his thought happened to pass through the prism of music.

Into the reasons which have, all at once, determined Michelet to "imagine" the hackneyed subject of Love, we need not enter. *L'Amour* is, of course, a book which every man and woman in France (and indeed throughout the European continent) will read, and which will most likely go through an unlimited number of editions. Yet we are much mistaken if any Continental reader is otherwise than strangely disappointed with the volume, and, above all, if those for whom it is ostensibly written do not throw it aside in indignant disdain. The book purports to be written in order to vindicate the rights of Continental wives to be better treated by their husbands; yet so strangely is this undertaking carried out, that the woman would (according to Anglo-Saxon notions of female dignity) cover herself with shame, who should accept the kind of "protectorate" M. Michelet demands for her.

The book is so exclusively, so extravagantly French, that it is next to impossible to describe it for the readers of any other country; still, although mistaken in the manner in which he has executed his work, M. Michelet had an honest intention in

writing it, and this we cannot avoid taking into account. We will give the words in which the author himself announces what he intends his book shall be. Addressing himself to the young men of all classes in Paris, he says : —

“Think well over all this, my dear friend, whatever you are, whether a student in the schools, or an artisan, — your position is of no consequence. Begin already, in your days and hours of recreation, to reflect, to prepare, to settle what is to be the future portion of your life. Profit by these hours, and if this book reaches you by chance, read over some of its pages, and think of them. The book (amongst other defects) is a short one. Others will take up the subject and enlarge upon it, and say, better than I have done, what is to be said. When he who writes this volume shall be under the earth, and enjoying rest from all his labors, a cleverer man than he is will take the idea of his imperfect sketch, and write, perhaps, a great and immortal work. But as, after all, the element whereof it would be formed is the same in you and in me, and is simply the human heart and its affections, you may yourself, all alone, and upon my unconnected notes, compose beforehand the chronicle of your life. Think it all over on Sundays, when the Bacchanalian round of your giddy comrades pouring down the staircase halts a moment at your door, and says: ‘What are you doing? — we wait for you, — we are off to the *Chaumière*, with Amanda and Jeanneton!’ Answer them, ‘I will come later, — I have still something to do.’

“If you reply to them these words, I will answer for the performance of a miracle; I will answer for it, that between the two pale flowers that are planted before your window, struggling against the Parisian atmosphere, a third will spring to life, — a flower, and yet a woman, — the dim, sweet semblance of a future affianced bride!”

Now this justice we must render to M. Michelet. What he has done voluntarily and *de parti pris*, in this strange production, is full of morality; what is immoral, indecent, in every sense revolting and absolutely insane, is involuntary. His aim is to introduce into the conjugal practices of France somewhat of those habits and feelings that make marriage so blessed a tie in Anglo-Saxon countries. He is shocked at what he sees around him, and he feels that between husband and wife there ought to exist some bond more tender, more worthy, than that of mere pecuniary interest. He acknowledges to himself, that two beings who are to go through life, perhaps to

encounter misfortune together, should be "matched" in other respects than in their "dot" alone. But the way in which he sets to work to remedy the evil is wrong, and increases a thousand-fold the debasement of the wife. His very system is founded on the inferiority, we might almost say, the degradation, of woman; for he represents her as so weak in health and organization, that all notion of her serving as a *helpmate* becomes impossible; and he apparently holds her virtue and good conduct as things so fragile, that he fancies, unless by lynx-like vigilance, no husband can ever make sure of his domestic honor and happiness. The worst of all this is, that a tolerably large portion of the feminine population of France will agree with M. Michelet, and actually be disposed to think that he treats women as they should be treated, and that his book is written in their favor. The thousand minute and — as they would seem to a woman of Anglo-Saxon race — humiliating attentions that M. Michelet's "model husband" pays to his wife, force upon you the conviction that the latter is physically and morally infirm; and up to a certain point, so are a large proportion of Parisian women, — the sickly hot-house products of the falsest civilization upon the face of the whole earth. In order to see how much truth there is in this, and how unhealthy a race of women M. Michelet has habitually had under the range of his observation, it would suffice to read the chapters of his work that are consecrated to the health of his heroine, the pages which he entitles *L'Hygiène*. It is enough to make one take a dislike to all Frenchwomen for evermore, for you cannot avoid seeing what miserable, *unfortified* creatures — bodily and mentally — they are. Study well what M. Michelet reckons the perfection of *régime* for a young woman, and you will see what the result must be. This chapter is interesting; for it explains a good deal of what French women are, and *why* they are so. Nothing is done to *strengthen* them. There is no good fat meat, no beef and mutton, no cold water, no out-of-door exercise, no fine racing gallops upon a generous horse and over broad, breezy downs, no muscular development aiding the development of that grand source of the superiority of English and American women, self-reliance, no true courage, no true sense of honor, no honesty,

none of the higher qualities whereby his *wife* is a man's best friend, his companion, and his equal. M. Michelet's heroine, his "model wife," is incapable of assuming responsibility,—she is, we repeat it, *infirm*; yet let it not be forgotten, she is the type of at least half the Frenchwomen whom Frenchmen would call "charming."

We confess that, on turning the last page of M. Michelet's most unsatisfactory volume, we felt refreshed to find lying under it, upon our table, two recent tales by Madame Reybaud. This lady has, perhaps, been longer than she ought in achieving her now very great literary reputation, for the very reason that she has never in any one of her numerous works shocked a good feeling or broken a rule of decency. She is one of the very few writers in France all of whose books may be put into the hands of women of all ages and positions in life. We do not mean the least in the world to detract from Madame Sand's immense merit as a writer; but we do most unequivocally and most categorically assert, that, if Madame Sand had not, in the very first fictions she presented to the public, flown in the face of every social law, outraged every sentiment of morality, and set at naught every religious enactment, they would not have so instantly seized the public applause. *Indiana, Valentine, Jacques*, and two or three more of the same school, were taken up by the champions of disorder and impiety in France long before any one ever dreamed of their being remarkable productions as to mere style and diction. It was long after she was the idol of the whole school of sceptics in belief, and of scoffers at morality, that Madame Sand was discovered to write more purely, more simply, and better than nine tenths of her contemporaries. Had she written in the outset works such as not only a woman, but an honest man, could have avowed, she would probably have seen at least ten or a dozen years elapse before she would have acquired her present fame, or her present capability of turning prose into gold.

Madame Charles Reybaud's has been a very different career, and while the brilliant creations of Madame Sand have fallen back into the shade which, sooner or later, always enwraps those literary creations that too closely represent a particular

period or a transient state of the public mind, Madame Reybaud's novels are likely to become, perhaps, those of all others in France that will most resemble what the English term their "standard" books. In the department of fiction, these do not exist in France; but if any Parisian publisher were to establish a Standard Library like those that have been set on foot by some of the principal publishers in London, he would hardly find any novels to put into his collection except those of Madame Reybaud. So perfectly fitting to his purpose he would certainly find none. One Paris publisher has tried up to a certain point the system of a Standard Library. But M. Hachette's collection is not quite of the same kind as those of the other side of the Channel, inasmuch as his is, strictly speaking, a Railway Library, and consequently demands books of a cheaper description and of a more mixed character. Madame Reybaud has solved one of the all but insoluble problems of French literature; she has had the art to make what is moral and proper amusing.

Besides the exceeding propriety and womanliness of whatever she writes, besides that charming evidence in every line of the authorship of a lady, of a real gentlewoman, Madame Reybaud has in her Southern nature a source of animation that is inexhaustible. She forces her reader to see with his own eyes all she describes, and you make acquaintance with every personage of her novels, as you would with living individuals, because you instinctively feel that the writer lives in their real and active intimacy. Madame Reybaud is in this respect one of the most entirely objective narrators in any literature of fiction. She never interferes with her creations, or puts herself in their place. She really creates, and the creatures of her fancy live and act for themselves. She is at the farthest remove possible from a *Realist*, yet nothing can be truer or more real than all her productions.

Both *Faustine* and *La Dernière Bohémienne* are extremely simple in their plots. The former is the history of a girl of noble birth, who is brought up in a small country town, and who is forced by circumstances to marry a wholesale tradesman in Paris. The circumstances that force her to this are, in French civilization, original, and beautifully told.

Faustine de Gondreville is the daughter of a colonel of the Empire, who, in dying, left his only child to the care of his sister. The two ladies inhabit a large, handsome dwelling, called by their neighbors "*la maison du Colonel*," in a provincial town. They are presumed to be very rich, and Mademoiselle Victoire, the maiden aunt, has the reputation of being the veriest miser in petticoats that ever existed. The notion of Faustine's fortune, however, so thoroughly possesses the imaginations of all the small *bourgeois* of the little town, that a certain Madame de Giropey, whose son is a captain in an African regiment, decides upon a marriage between the latter and the orphan, with whose parents she had been intimate. Calculating, nevertheless, that, Faustine being richer than her son, she had better get love upon her side, the wise dowager De Giropey is for ever sending Gaston to execute some commission at *la maison du Colonel*, and the consequence is, that, in a marvellously short time, the two young people are in a state of mutual adoration. Upon this, Madame de Giropey sets out on her official expedition, formally asks the hand of her niece from Mademoiselle Victoire, and is refused. The truth comes out at last. Faustine has not one farthing. The pretended avarice was merely a *ruse de guerre*, and Mademoiselle Victoire is a kind of Caleb Balderston of a higher class. The Colonel's daughter is so utterly destitute, that she contributes to the maintenance of her aunt and herself, by selling embroidery anonymously to a great establishment at Marseilles. What is to be done? In the name of all the *convenances*, and all the prudent practices of the female heads of families in France, what shall this imprudent mother do now? She has brought all the mischief about by miscalculation, and what remedy is there for the evil? The worst of the matter is, that not only are both lovers inconsolable, but the mother-in-law elect, Madame de Giropey, is as unhappy as they are; for she had made up her mind to have Faustine for her daughter-in-law, and was sincerely attached to the girl. The scenes in which this little domestic drama is enacted are admirably told, and for the following few lines, we give Madame Reybaud especial credit; for, as stand the conventionalities of French society, few writers

would have ventured to publish them. It is settled that Faustine shall marry a vulgar man of low station, who is madly in love with her.

“The commonplace ugliness of M. Alexandre [the intended bridegroom] and the beauty of Mademoiselle de Gondreville, formed a terrible contrast. A thick, short-set man, with heavy features, greasy hair, and chubby, purple hands, on one side ; and on the other, that handsome Faustine, who, with her majestic figure, her long bands of thick, fair hair, and her plain dress of brown woollen stuff, seemed some queen of ancient Gaul. For the first time in her life, Madame de Giropey was on the point of acting without reflection, and from a spontaneous and passionate impulse. She was carried out of herself, and at the bottom of her heart she asked herself whether she ought not to send for her son home, to marry these lovers, and trust in Providence to furnish them all the means of living. But it was nothing more than a sort of flash of lightning through her brain ; and recalling her inexorable reason, she cast a glance at the portrait of her deceased friend, Madame de Gondreville, as though to bid her a mute farewell, and, taking hold of Faustine’s hand, alluded to her approaching marriage with M. Alexandre.”

This abominable union takes place. Mademoiselle de Gondreville becomes Madame Alexandre, and actually sits poring over account-books in a den of a back shop somewhere near the Rue des Lombards. Her husband’s jealousy is perfectly ferocious, and the fair Faustine fades away, no one knows why, save herself and Madame de Giropey. The revolution of February, 1848, breaks out, however ; the *épiciér* proves to be a furious anti-Republican, posts himself in front of the barricades, is shot by an insurgent, and is brought home almost dead. With the life that is left him he begs his wife’s pardon for all his harsh treatment of her, and leaves her the whole of his large fortune. A few years later we are allowed to guess that she marries the object of her first unforgotten love, and all ends for the best. The great charm of *Faustine* lies in the descriptions of intimate domestic details with which it abounds, especially in the entire picture of everyday existence in the wretched little town where Mademoiselle de Gondreville dwells with her aunt,—a place like many French provincial towns, *sans* poetry, *sans* life, *sans* cleanliness, *sans* everything.

*La Dernière Bohémienne* may perhaps be called more romantic by professed novel-readers, but it is not in reality of greater interest than *Faustine*. It is the often-told tale of a creature of uncivilized race who cannot be won over to civilization. Mimi, the *Bohémienne*, has this one great merit, that she is a *bona fide* Gypsy, and not copied from any of the pre-existent Gypsy heroines, such as Mignon, the Esmeralda, or Fenella. To only one affection does her strange heart seem to open; she loves Gaston de Renoyal, and would consent to settle down into the position of a wife and mother like other people (with a duchess's coronet into the bargain); but the young Duke is attached to his cousin, Irene de Kerbréjean, and when he marries her, Mimi disappears mysteriously, and with the last daughter of the Gypsy race conventional life has no more to do. *La Dernière Bohémienne* has, besides the interest of the events it narrates, a great source of attraction in its charming pictures of scenery and of country life in Brittany.

One of the reasons which produce the originality of Madame Reybaud's works, and render them admissible always among women of the most rigid morality, is the fact, so unusual in French literature, of her attributing to unmarried girls a certain degree of *substantiality*,—if the word may be allowed,—which altogether fails them in every other author of the last century and a half in France. Madame Reybaud's example, though so successful in her case, and leading her to such durable and honorable renown, has found few imitators. One of those who now and then trod in Madame Reybaud's steps is M. Octave Feuillet, and at this moment he probably owes one of his greatest successes to the introduction into the drama of *Le Roman d'un Jeune Homme Pauvre* of the unusual element we have referred to. *Le Roman d'un Jeune Homme Pauvre* was first a tale in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, which was thought well of, as being of a more moral and respectable nature than is common with French novels. Transported from the library to the stage, it has found the basis of its success entirely in the circumstance we point out. It is to the fact of French citizens being able to take their daughters, sisters, and nieces to the Vaudeville to see this new piece,

that its popularity is due. There is in it a very moderate degree of talent of any kind ; it has no originality whatever, and the language is of absolutely third or fourth rate quality, as to style ; yet *Le Jeune Homme Pauvre* is an immense success, — a success, it must be avowed, confined exclusively to the secondary class of society, and ignored by those who lay claim to the slightest taste or discernment in literature, but which deserves emphatic notice because it characterizes certain tendencies and aptitudes of the *Bourgeoisie* in France.

From the moment M. Octave Feuillet appeared, the *Bourgeoisie* adopted him. His last two productions, *Dalila* and the *Jeune Homme Pauvre*, are as to their subjects as dissimilar as any two works by the same writer can well be ; but the treatment of the subjects shows the identity of authorship, for they are treated by the same methods, and with the same want of truth and strength.

*Dalila* is the old story of an artist who is seduced and morally “made away with” by a great lady fifteen years or so older than himself, who by his desertion caused the death of a young girl to whom he is affianced. André Roswein, the presupposed “genius,” is a young composer, whose first opera places him on the pinnacle of fame, and who is then and there immediately devoured by a certain Princess Leonora Falconière, the original type of which personage is now, in real flesh and blood presence, roaming through the world, from east to west, and from north to south. To begin at the beginning, the first fault of *Dalila* is its title. *Dalila* exists only when you presuppose Samson. One of the wittiest of Parisian critics, on the first representation of the piece, after asking where the hero is to be found, added, “I only see the jawbone of the ass, but not the hand that holds it, — *où est Samson ?*” It is really too vulgar a mistake to be for ever prating about these “geniuses” who are destroyed by an unworthy love. If M. Feuillet were upon another level, intellectually speaking, he would know that they never existed. The so-called “artist” who is thus absorbed is no artist at all ; he is a mere amateur, and we may be extremely sorry for the unhappy young man ; but in losing him, the public loses nothing. There is, as far as *genius* goes, nothing in him to regret.

*Dalila* is altogether a mistake. It is the attempt at vice of a quiet, decorous, commonplace writer, who is desirous to see how he shall succeed in a line which is so profitable to many of his colleagues. It makes one think of some timid, consumptive, demure young gentleman, who, from being "mamma's darling" all his life, is suddenly fired with the wish to eclipse all the dandies of the fashionable world, and who plunges recklessly into pleasures and sins which as seen in him never fascinate, and against which his whole nature and aspect perpetually protest. However, the very foolishness of *Dalila* was the cause of its success. Grave fathers of families indulged for an hour or two in a peep at the abominable "great world," as they are pleased to denominate it, where Leonora Falconière is the presiding fairy, and felt at ease with an author who in the end concluded as they themselves would have done, and sent them away happy in the persuasion that beings so thoroughly of their own calibre in every respect as the hero might be ranked as "geniuses," and wept over as fallen stars.

*Le Jeune Homme Pauvre* aims, on the contrary, at being moral in the extreme, and is not in reality a whit more so than *Dalila*, because there is in it no more truth than in the latter. All the personages are little and false in the extreme, and, with vast pretence at sentimentality and romance, there is not among them all a heart that really beats, and not a drop of living blood in all their veins. The Marquis de Champcey is a ruined nobleman,—a sort of would-be Sir Charles Grandison, morally speaking,—but about as far from his model as a copy of the Transfiguration by a boarding-school young lady would be from Raphael's own immortal picture. M. de Champcey turns bailiff, or *intendant*, to a family of rich French Creoles, who are all of the feminine gender, the only man among them being a bed-ridden, paralytic grandfather, whose death forms a great feature in the drama. M. Laroque had, in his early days, exercised the respectable profession of a corsair, and in that capacity had been guilty of depriving the father of Maxime de Champcey of the greater portion of all he possessed. Hence the difficulties of the Champcey family. All this is found out on

the death of old Laroque, whose will is placed by the ladies of the house in Maxime's hands. The said Maxime, on reading the papers before him, finds himself the legal possessor of the fortune of the Laroques, and burns the paper in which the repentant corsair has set this formula forth. He does this because he is in love with Marguerite Laroque, and will not disturb her peace of mind by proving to her that her father was a thief; but Maxime chooses to forget, in thus doing, that he is throwing away, as he has no right to do, the future subsistence of his young sister, for whose sake alone he has resigned himself to the acceptance of a subordinate, if not actually a menial position. Of course the whole ends by the union of Maxime and Marguerite; and a more mawkish and absurd courtship than that of these two most unreal individuals, it is barely possible to imagine. They attain to the singular combination of being wishy-washy and exaggerated at once. They whine and rant at the same time. *Le Jeune Homme Pauvre*, however, presents just that quantity of romanticism which the French *Bourgeoisie* is capable of absorbing, and it flocks even from the provinces to come and "assist" at a representation of M. Feuillet's piece.

Let us now turn from the discussion of such small, pale, imperfect *ephemera*, to what a much dreaded English critic used to term "a *real* book,"—one of those works that do honor to their writers and their age. In a former number we called attention to a small volume by M. Eugène Fromentin, entitled *Un Été dans le Sahara*; and while stating the deep impression it had made in France, we pointed out some of its numerous and striking beauties. Pictures like his regenerate the somewhat *blasé* world of letters in France, and make it young again by the virtue of admiration. *Une Année dans le Sahel* was written on this wise. One evening, as dusk is falling, our traveller meets a tribe of wandering Saharans, and the longing for the desert comes over him. Its unfathomable mystery tempts him, and he is irresistibly compelled to go forth. This it is which fascinates and compels the reader too. He is dragged beyond the bounds of all conventionalities, out of the narrow, noisy, meaningless life of every day, by a real genuine poet, in whom the poetic energy is such that

it is impossible to resist him. Follow him you must. What he sees, you see, what he hears, you hear, and you live his life wherever he wanders, — in the tent, in the waste, in the *Douar*, in all the scenes of Arab existence, which are as evident to you as if you had perceived them by the aid of your own senses.

This inspiration by the desert is so strong in M. Fromentin, that between the portion of his new book which precedes his excursion to the Sahara, and that which follows it, there is an almost immeasurable distance. There are beautiful passages in the first half, but they might have been written by any other equally talented writer and equally observant traveller, — whereas the latter half, after the return from the desert, is so thoroughly original, so unlike anything we have read, that we should not know where to find its parallel. It makes you think of Rubens, — it reminds you of Byron; but, better than all, it copies no one. Every page seems to bear the impress of the desert aspects. There is the sharp, pure outline, the fierceness of color that is yet harmonious, the breadth, the intensity, the saturation by sight, if it may be thus expressed, the silence, the grandeur, — but, above all, there is the poetry, inseparable from the whole, yet attainable only by those whose own latent poetry of soul draws out magnetically the same element from whatsoever surrounds them.

The latter portion of *Une Année dans le Sahel* opens with the account of a negro *fête* upon the sea-shore, near Algiers; and assuredly no painter ever threw more splendid colors upon his canvas than M. Fromentin has thrown upon these pages. They are gorgeous and dazzle till they make the eye ache.

“Every tint,” says our author, “that Oriental dyes can assume, was there, in its most blinding glare, and the polychromic visions of the negro imagination were realized in their extremest gaudiness. Silks, woollen stuffs, striped linens, on which gold and silver embroidery was thrown by handfuls; long hanging sleeves sparkling with spangles, tight bodices flaming with thin shreds of metal and jewelled clasps, waving veils of every hue, clothing the female form as with a rainbow; trinkets, gold ornaments, pearls, beads, coral chains, necklaces of Guinea shells, anklets sounding musical at every step, — these were a few of

the sights that arrested the eye. Fancy, in addition to this, three or four ear-rings in each ear, small mirrors fixed in turbans, on sable arms bracelets that reached from wrist to elbow, on every finger a ring, flowers in profusion everywhere, and in every hand a white kerchief used as a fan, and giving one the notion of a legion of vast white-winged birds flying away."

Over all this glittering attire, it must be observed that a scarlet mantle is thrown, and that of the sable wearers of such mantles there are somewhere about one thousand present at the *fête*.

"These women were all wrapped, more or less, in their drapery of flame; and the drapery was of a red that no shade mitigated or modified,—a red, pure from all mixture, unsoftened, inexpressible to a painter,—inflamed, too, by the sun, and made still more violent by the contact of the other irritating colors. All the furious tints I speak of were spread out over a foreground of grass of a perfectly glaring emerald green, and against a background of the intensest, harshest blue, for the wind was high and the sea was ruffled."

The incidents, properly so called, of M. Fromentin's work, are insignificant; but every modification in the exterior aspect of the surrounding scenes, is reproduced with such vividness and such passion, that an Arab smoking his pipe at the entrance of a tent, or a camel standing in motionless stupor upon the sands, becomes an incident never to be forgotten. There is a shooting expedition to the Haloula Lake, which engraves itself on the reader's memory with the force of the most stirring romance, and the most adventurous hero or heroine of a novel scarcely leaves a deeper impression than is produced by a certain swan found dead at the bottom of one of the sportsman's boats. "At the farther end lay three large birds,—two ibises, of a dusky color, and one magnificent swan:—'He has killed the Lake-King!' I exclaimed, as I saw before me the glorious bird, lying prone, hit right in the heart, where the purple of a wide-bleeding wound increased, as it were, the royalty of his beauty."

One incident there is, and a most dramatic one, which engages our attention from the beginning to the end of *Une Année dans le Sahel*. It is the episode of a Hadjoute woman, named Hâona, of whom we lose sight for several chapters,

and who, when we least expect it, reappears to charm or to appall. This mysterious creature seems at first to belong only to the realm of sound, and the first announcement of her presence is made through the agency of a silvery laugh, that shakes drops of melody like fragrance through the air. When she appears, it is as a *masque*, whose perfect grace cannot be all hidden by the thick folds of white muslin. She stops at a stall to barter trinkets with a Moor, and her exquisite voice again lets its incomparable tones be heard, softened now by the snowy draperies that intervene between her lips and the air. Our traveller ends by making her acquaintance, but before he does so, Abdallah, the Moorish trinket-vender, has time to warn him against "the Kabyle woman." Poor Hâona's beauty is as touching as her voice. Who or what she is, is never very clearly told. She has been twice married, and it is rumored the last husband is still living, but he gives no sign of life. Hâona has strange manners for an Oriental; she unceremoniously admits to her home, even to her table, our Western wanderer and one of his friends, and she talks with them of certain particularities of Eastern education with a freedom that is not common in a daughter of Islam. But when fatigued with this effort of intellectuality, her pretty head droops upon its silken cushion, and with eyes half shut, and lips half open, she lapses into slumber like a child. Her foreign visitors glide noiselessly away, and their last glance at their fair hostess shows her lost in sleep, her long circling chains of fresh orange-blossoms escaping from her relaxing fingers.

Our travellers are bidden, by an Arab Kaïd, to a sort of fair, held after a grand cattle sale at Blidah. An exquisite *fantasia* follows some very remarkable horse-racing. Among others, a certain chief, called Amar-ben-Arif, a dark, sinister-looking warrior, surpasses all competitors, and is mounted on a steed which throws all others into the shade. The warlike games proceed, and still "the man of the sword," as his countrymen style him, bears off the supremacy everywhere. He mounts a fresh horse, and leaves his first courser free. After a few moments of equestrian preluding, he rides close up to the barriers, behind which are standing the lookers-on. Here he executes

some of those extraordinary feats which are possible only to Arab horses and Arab riders. All at once, his steed leaps up high into the air, and comes down on the other side of the railing, in the middle of the crowd. A wild sharp cry rends the air,—a white form is seen writhing on the ground. “Seize the murderer!” is the loud order of the Kaïd, echoed by thousands of voices; but the murderer is already far away,—he has bounded through the ranks of the spectators, and, riding fleet as the wind towards the hills, you see the ever-diminishing outline of the Kabyle couched upon the neck of one steed, avoiding thus the bullets shot from a hundred guns, while his second horse keeps on at his side, nor ever flags in his desperate course. The white form is taken up. Blood flows in a torrent from the head that has been crushed by a blow from a steel-shod hoof, and all life is extinct! Poor Hâona! She, too, had come to the *fantasia*, and Amar-ben-Arif was the “second spouse” of whom report spoke mysteriously.

The last glance we take of the ill-fated Hadjoute, with her soft, luscious voice, reveals to us her dead body, laid out upon a couch. The fractured brow concealed, the face has all its old loveliness,—“the head slightly on one side, the arms stiffened, the eyelids quite shut in a sleep that was never more to end, she was like to what we had often seen her before, when she dropped off to sleep on her own silken couch; and she was now, as then, covered with her white orange-blossoms, but this time the flowers outlived her, not she them.”

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ART. VII. — *Memoir of Theophilus Parsons, Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, with Notices of some of his Contemporaries.* By his Son, THEOPHILUS PARSONS. Boston: Ticknor and Fields. 1859. 16mo. pp. 476.

WE look with great complacency on the genealogical researches which have been pursued with so much zeal by American antiquaries of the present day. We have, indeed, no